

# **Dodger Preschool Handbook**

## **4-Year-Old Program**

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### **Purpose**

Dodger Preschool was organized in May 1973. A Board of Directors was elected by the council of the First Congregational United Church of Christ to plan and supervise a non-profit, Iowa licensed preschool for children in the Fort Dodge Community. Since then, Dodger Preschool has evolved and has become part of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) for Four-Year-Old Children.

You can find out more about the SWVPP here:

<https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/early-childhood/statewide-voluntary-preschool-program-four-year-old-children>

### **Our Mission**

The mission of Dodger Preschool is to provide a safe, caring, and purposeful early learning environment for children, ages 3-4 in the Fort Dodge area. Dodger Preschool follows the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and implements research-based curriculums that teach social, emotional, physical, and academic skills to prepare students to be successful members of our society.

### **Preschool Program (Days & Times)**

At Dodger Preschool, four-year-old preschool meets three days a week for a total of 10 hours.

The morning class meets on Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 8:00AM to 11:20AM.

The afternoon class meets Monday, Wednesday, Thursday from 12:00PM to 3:20PM.

We provide opportunities for children to learn and grow through indoor and outdoor play, small group activities, and large group experiences. We aim to surround children with love, understanding, and acceptance, so that each might come to know themselves as unique and important individuals.

### **Staff**

Our staff consists of a full time teacher and director and a full time teacher's associate. For both 4-year-old classes (AM & PM), we typically take up to 15 students (exceptions may be made, but class sizes will never exceed 20 students).

## **Registration**

Registration for the next school year typically begins in early December and is open until all spots are filled. Students are enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis. A child **must be 4 years old on or before September 15th** to be enrolled in our 4 year old program. Please contact us for the link to fill out the online registration form. There is **no tuition charge** for 4-year-old preschool. Please call us at 515-955-6060 or email [dodgerpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:dodgerpreschool@gmail.com) with questions regarding registration.

## **Admission Forms**

1. Parent contact information
2. Emergency contact information
3. Persons authorized to pick the child up from the preschool
4. Medical contact (child's doctor name, phone, address)
5. Dental contact (child's dentist name, phone, address (if they don't have one can list the parent's dentist or any other dentist))
6. Copy of a physical signed by a health professional and most up-to-date immunization form
7. Field trips/Off site activities authorization form
8. Authorization to administer sunscreen and/or insect repellent
9. Media release form
10. Parent/Teacher Contract that includes
  - Agreement to two home visits (fall and spring)
  - Child is accompanied by a parent/guardian when he/she attends the orientation session (Open House, Home Visits)
  - A parent must notify the director by written notice 2 weeks prior to withdrawing their child
  - Parent/Guardian must attend a family school event

## **Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant Requirements**

Dodger Preschool implements the following requirements to receive the SWVPP Grant, which is what allows 4-year-olds in the state of Iowa to attend a free quality preschool program:

- An early childhood licensed teacher responsible for designing and implementing effective learning environments using instructional strategies to enhance children's learning.
- A minimum of 10 hours per week of quality preschool instruction.
- The program must provide family involvement opportunities such as home visits, family engagement outside of preschool day, and conferences.
- Implement the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.
- Have rigorous and relevant curriculum and assessments to enhance children's strengths, interests, and knowledge (based on the Iowa Early Learning Standards); and alignment with K-12 standards and academic expectations.
- Appropriate adult-child ratio of 1 to 10 and a maximum group size of 20.

## **Assessment of the Developmental Progress and Learning of Children**

Teaching Strategies believes that authentic, ongoing assessment of children in any early childhood program is the key to planning appropriate learning experiences that respond to children's individual interests, learning styles, and abilities.

Creative Curriculum GOLD helps conduct an authentic, observation-based assessment. With Teaching Strategies GOLD we know what to look for and how to support children's continued development and learning.

Having a solid picture of individual children's progress makes it easier to focus our observations and to consider the whole child. This is useful when partnering with families to plan how best to support their children's development and learning.

The Fort Dodge Community School District preschool program and partner sites are informed by ongoing systematic, formal, and informal assessment approaches to provide information on child learning and development. Teaching Strategies GOLD is the program's ongoing assessment tool which has been tested for reliability and validity. These assessments occur within the context of reciprocal communications with families and with sensitivity to the cultural contexts in which children develop. Assessment results are used to benefit children by informing teachers about sound decisions, teaching, and program improvement. It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

### **Program Assessment**

Fort Dodge preschool and partner sites implement the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year we provide families with a questionnaire to evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses. A report of the annual evaluation findings is available to families, staff, and appropriate advisory and governing boards. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

### **Discipline Policy**

Our teaching staff is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful in handling challenging behaviors. Dodger Preschool implements Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a process for creating a safe and effective school environment and it provides consistent procedures and processes for all students and staff. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individual plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

### **Injury Policy**

Your child's health and safety is of utmost importance to us. In the event that an injury may occur, we strive to provide your child with the care they need. A parent/guardian will be notified of any injury a child may receive within 24 hours of the incident. All staff are required to have up-to-date First Aid/CPR/AED training. If an injury requires first aid or medical care, a staff member will fill out an injury/incident report and it will be kept in your child's file. All children must have an emergency medical treatment authorization form on file with up-to-date information.

### **Drop-off/Pick-up Policy**

Children are to be brought to the classroom upon arrival by the person providing them transportation. The person picking up the child must come to the classroom upon departure. We have a sign-in/sign-out binder that must be signed by the person dropping off/picking up upon arrival and departure. This policy is necessary for the safety of our students and also allows for daily exchange between guardians and teachers.

### **Attendance Policy**

Children must be brought to school promptly at 8:00AM or 12:00PM and picked up by 11:20AM or 3:20PM. It is very important for children to arrive on time so they do not miss out on activities or disrupt the group due to late arrival. It is equally important for children to be picked up on time as they do not want to feel left behind when others are going home.

Please call to let us know (515-955-6060) if your child will be late so we can make necessary arrangements. The preschool door gets locked 10 minutes after arrival time for safety purposes. So you will need to be let in if you arrive late.

A Stop/Go sign hangs in the preschool window. When it is flipped to "GO" this means you can come into the classroom at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day to pick up your child. The teachers need the time before class for preparation so please do not try to come into the classroom until the sign is flipped to "GO". The doors will be locked until 8:00AM or 12:00PM for arrival and again after children have arrived. The doors will unlock again at departure time.

If there is a change in who is picking up your child from school, please inform the teacher ahead of time in written form (note, email, message) and make sure that person is listed on the "Who is allowed to pick up my child from school" form.

### **Illness Policy**

For everyone's health and safety, it is mandatory that sick children are not brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms the night before, he or she will not be admitted the following day:

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pink eyes with drainage
- Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

For an ill child to return the following must be established:

- Fever free (without medicine) for 24 hours
- Chicken Pox: one week after onset
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye): 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

When a child develops signs of an illness while at preschool, parents, guardians, or other persons authorized by a parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child.

If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up, will be provided a place to rest where other individuals will not be exposed.

### **Over the Counter Medication**

Over the counter medications will only be given with a statement from your doctor. If your doctor suggests a non-prescription medication, the doctor must sign a statement giving the name, dosage, and frequency of the medication to be used. A "School Medication Authorization and Instruction Form" with parent signature is also required. Medication must be in its original container.

### **Snack Policy**

A nutritious snack will be served to your child each preschool day. We follow the guidelines given by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Each child will have the opportunity to bring a special birthday treat (cookies, ice cream, etc.). Your child's teacher will communicate with you to determine the best date to bring this

special treat. If the birthday treat does not meet our nutritional guidelines, we will serve something in addition to meet the guidelines.

### **Dietary Restrictions**

If your child requires a special diet and is unable to eat an item(s) on the menu, please discuss it with the nurse. We will provide you with an Allergy/Dietary Restrictions form for you and your doctor to fill out. Special medical/health diets require written instructions from a doctor, including substitutions. We are willing to work with you and your doctor to meet your child's special dietary needs. Religious or personal preferences may be made if a parent provides written instructions. All food provided by parents must meet required nutritional guidelines. Teachers reserve the right to send foods that do not comply with these guidelines back home.

### **Extra Set of Clothes**

Whether it is spilled milk at snack, a paint mess, or just didn't make it to the bathroom in time; please provide an extra set of clothes (top, bottoms, underwear, socks) in a gallon sized zip-lock baggie to keep at school. Write your child's name on each clothing item and on the outside of the bag.

### **Toileting Procedures**

Toilet Learning Staff post and follow changing procedures (as outlined in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table). These procedures are used to evaluate teaching staff who change diapers. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program.

- Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- Staff Checks children for signs that diapers or pull ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
- Staff changes children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
- At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
- Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for any object involved with food or feeding.
- Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device. Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.
- Staff members whose primary function is preparing food do not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed for the day.

- Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.

### **Healthy Environment**

In order to maintain a healthy environment for children and adults; staff and volunteers demonstrate safe practices, foster safety awareness among children and parents, utilize NAEYC's Cleaning & Sanitation Frequency Table and Universal Precautions (Bloodborne Pathogens Policy & Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection Policy). Sanitation and ventilation are used rather than sprays, air freshening chemicals or deodorizers to control odors in inhabited areas of the facility and custodial closets.

Areas are maintained so children and adults who have allergies or any other special environmental health needs can have a safe, healthy environment according to the recommendations of a health professional.

### **Cleaning and Sanitation Schedules**

Classrooms, restrooms, and kitchens have specific Cleaning and Sanitation Schedules which are completed by the appropriate staff members and kept on file for review.

Classroom- Teachers and janitorial staff ensure the following regulations are completed as specified:

- Exits are unobstructed.
- Laminate/tile floors are cleaned & sanitized daily & when soiled.
- Carpets are vacuumed when children are not present.
- Carpets are cleaned so they are dry when children are present.
- Surfaces/toys that go into the mouth or have exposure to other body fluids are cleaned & sanitized after each child's use.
- Toys are cleaned weekly and when soiled.
- Dress-up clothes not worn on the head are cleaned weekly.
- Machine-washable toys are cleaned weekly & when soiled.
- Cot covers are cleaned weekly & when soiled
- Blankets are cleaned monthly & when soiled.
- Cubbies are cleaned monthly & when soiled.
- Hats are cleaned after each child's use.

Carpeting and Cloth Furnishings- Carpeting that is soiled with body fluids should be cleaned using the manufacturer's instructions or vacuum using a HEPA filter followed by carpet cleaning using a wet vacuuming method.

### **Open Door Policy**

Dodger Preschool has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to observe any time during the preschool day. Parents of prospective students are also welcome to observe. Please call the preschool, 515-955-6060 to make arrangements. Parents are asked to wait three weeks after the start of the school year to visit the preschool during school hours to allow children to adjust to our schedule and routines. If a parent is a registered sex offender, a restricted access policy will be put into place before he/she will be allowed on the school grounds.

### **Pet Policy**

We love to have family pets come visit the preschool. Before bringing your pet to share, you must present an up to date vaccination record and be sure of any allergies the preschoolers might have.

### **Transportation**

Dodger Preschool does not provide transportation to or from school. However, we are willing to make suggestions for car pools.

### **Field Trips**

In order for your child to attend field trips, an authorization form must be completed. We will notify everyone ahead of time before field trips occur. It is up to the parent/guardian to make arrangements for transporting their preschooler to and from the field trip destination. If a parent is unable to provide their child transportation for the field trip, they are responsible for arranging a carpool. If chaperoning, please arrange for sibling care on field trip days. We expect chaperones to help keep the students together in groups and follow the same classroom rules the children must follow. Be respectful, be responsible, be safe.

### **Snow Days**

We follow the Fort Dodge Community School District when decisions are made for canceling school. If the district cancels due to inclement weather, the morning and afternoon classes will be canceled. However, if the district has a 2-hour delay, only the morning class will not meet that day. If the district calls an early out due to inclement weather and preschool is not already in session at the time of the decision, we will not have an afternoon class. Parents are encouraged, however, to use discretion when determining if it is safe to send their child(ren) to preschool.

It will be up to the discretion of the Board of Directors to determine if missed school days will be made up.

### **Toys at School**

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school or have in their backpacks. Toys should be kept at home. It will eliminate an extra distraction and prevent toys from being lost, broken, or “borrowed”. An exception will be made on designated “show and tell” days.

### **Weapons at School**

We have a zero tolerance policy for dangerous weapons (real or toy) on the premises of our school.